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The Chapter.

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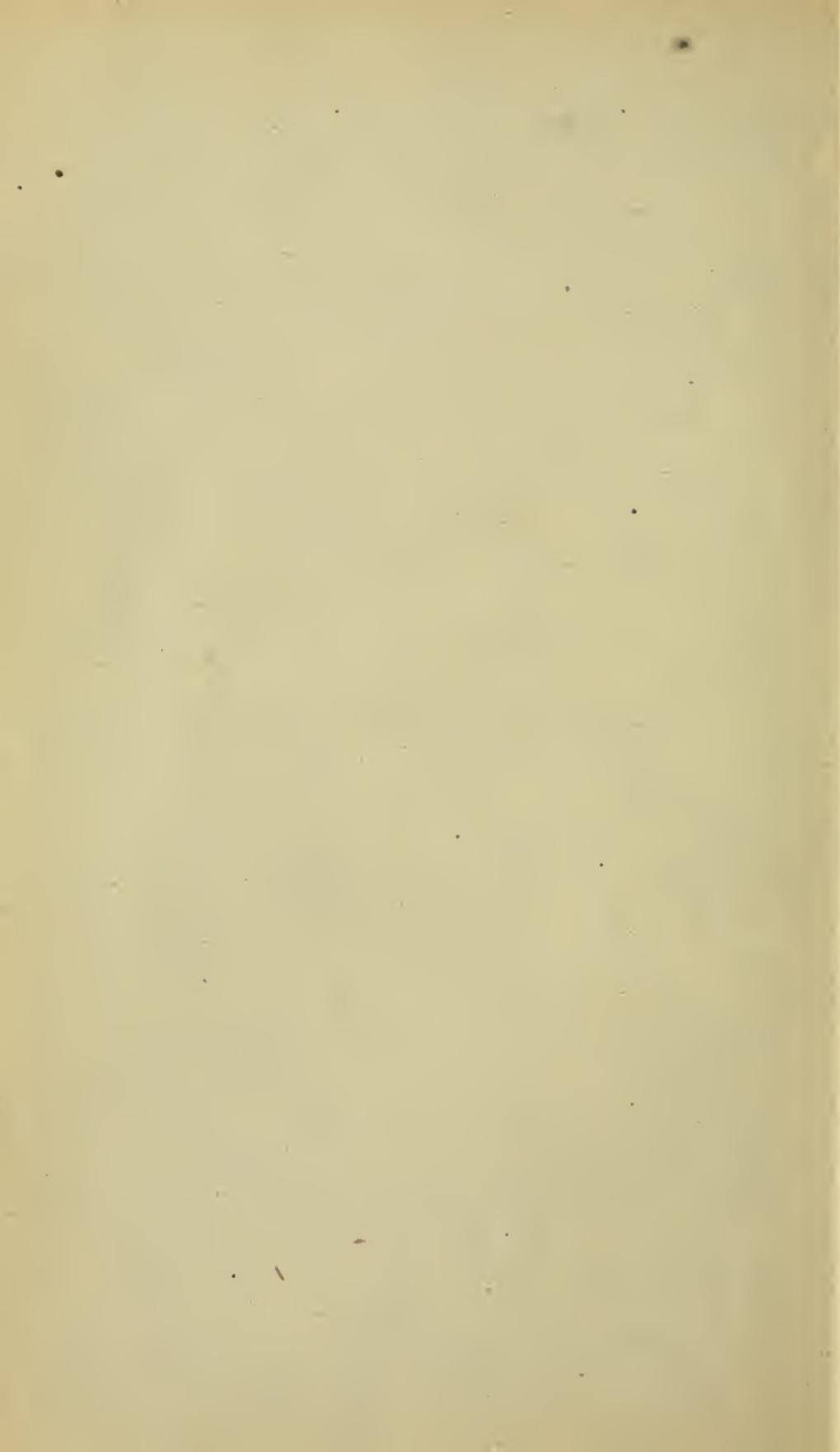
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THE CHAPTER;

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A

COMPILATION OF POEMS

BY

VARIOUS AUTHORS.



C
SHELDON & COMPANY,
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1869.

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PEREFACE. —

HAVING in my possession a few unpublished poems, I thought it desirable to place them before the public. The poems contained in this little book are mostly the productions of the members of the Zeta Psi Fraternity. It is my intention, with the assistance of Mr. I. C. Pierson and others, to publish a collection of the Zeta Psi songs, making, with the "Chapter," a uniform edition.

My sincere thanks are due to Mrs. John L. Flagg, of Troy, not only for the readiness with which she responded to my request to furnish a poem for the "Chapter," but also for the interest she has since manifested in the success of the undertaking.

To my friend and fellow-member of the New York bar, Mr. M. W. Hazeltine, and to my brother in the Fraternity, Professor Rodney Welch, the talented poet of the West, I also extend my thanks.

S. M., JR.

STATEN ISLAND, November 1, 1868.



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THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

OF THE

Grand Chapter of the "Zeta Psi" Fraternity,

THIS LITTLE BOOK,

Containing the Productions of some of its Members,

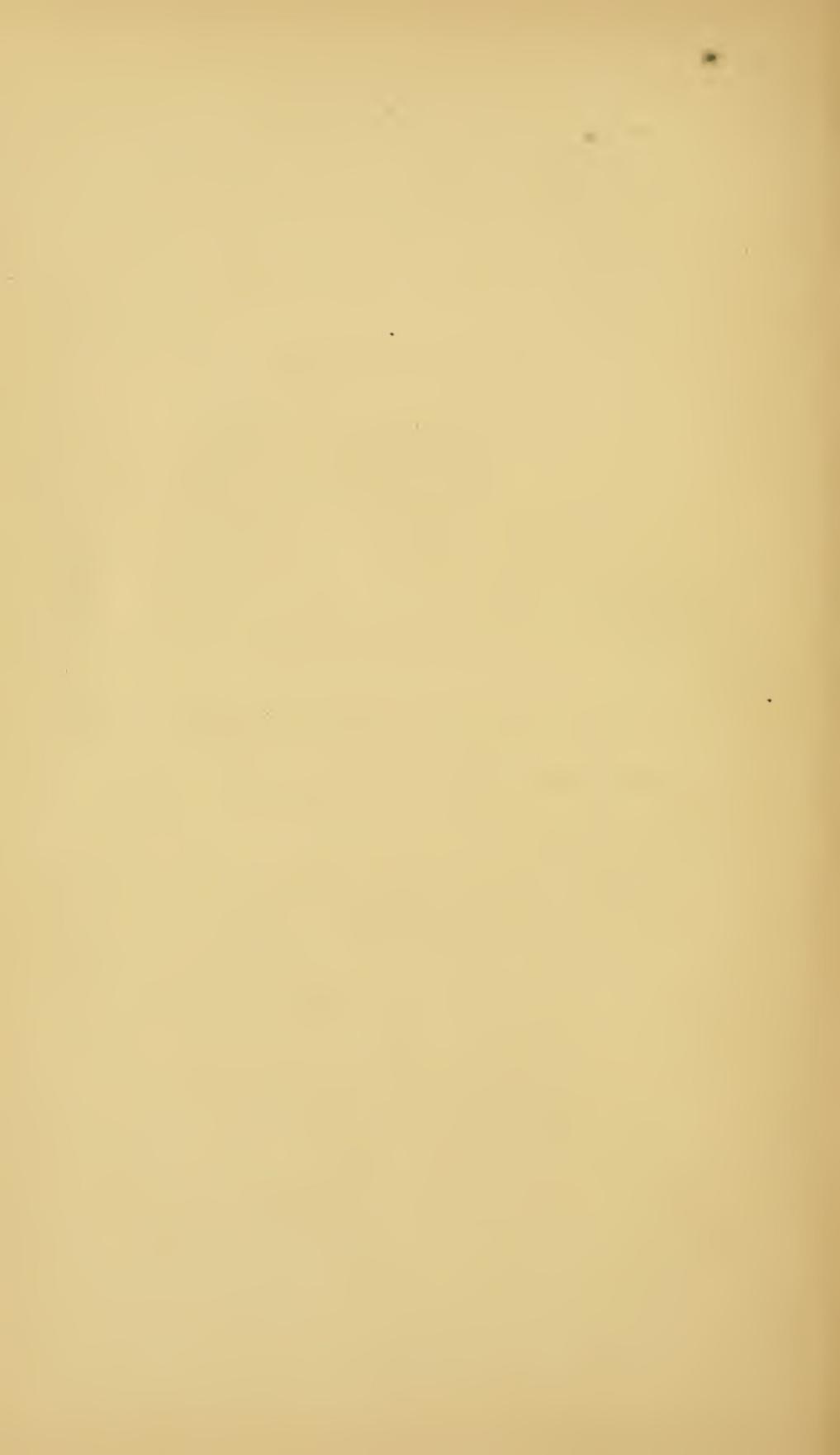
IS, WITH GREAT RESPECT, INSCRIBED BY

THE COMPILER.



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THE EXILE OF CECIL.

A LEGEND OF MARYLAND.

"Herein was my Lord Cecil more fortunate ; for, being attainted of divers acts of high treason, and notably of contumelious persistency in the false mummeries and damnable heresies of Rome, he was banished into the King's Plantations in North America ; and shortly thereafter the Lord Cecil, with certain of the retainers, his serving men, did take ship at Gravesend, for the King's Province of Maryland.

"And there being a masque the same night at Whitehall, the Honorable Mistress Neville, my Lord of Warwick's heiress and maid of honor to the Queen's Majesty, did take boat privily, being disguised, and go to the Lord Cecil, into his ship. And presently the ship set sail."—Extract from "*A True History of Divers Notable Occurrences in the Reigns of their late Majesties, Elizabeth and James.*" Bristol, 1633.

THE book is ancient; moth and rust
Have aided time and change,
The leaves are stiff with clinging dust,
The characters are strange:
Tales of a vanished age are they
Recorded in the pages gray.

Of Raleigh and his velvet cloak,
Of Essex and his ring;
How Drake the Spanish squadron broke,
How Steenie swayed the king.
And how, bereft of all beside,
The banished Cecil gained his bride.

Her face was like an April day,
 Her baffled lovers swore,
Quite powerless to break away—
 'Twas hopeless to adore !
For something roguish in her eye
Made wild work of their gallantry.

Her foot and hand ! to see her dance,
 Was worth a fortnight's journey !
George Villiers brought her gloves from France,
 And bore one at a tourney ;
And vowed no mantle in Madrid
A lovelier foot and ankle hid.

No wonder Cecil feared to speak,
 Where livelier men had stammered,
And found their love-phrase strangely weak ;
 No syllable he uttered,
But, in the fashion of the time,
Consigned his ardent prayers to rhyme.

For verse was then a royal road,
 And pilgrims swarmed upon it ;
When hearts were melted by an ode
 And opened to a sonnet ;
So Cecil wrote some lines about her,
Swearing he could not live without her.

But there was nothing languishing
Or weak in Mistress Neville;
She owned a heart—a stony thing—
And he was monstrous civil;
She deemed his verse, tho', somewhat tame,
Besides, she found his meters lame.

This brought small comfort to his soul;
But, ere a week were over,
Fate bade him play a darker role
Than this of sighing lover;
And England held nor hope nor home
For him who kept the faith of Rome.

A thousand frantic pulpits flung,
Their curses at the Pope:
The axe on many a scaffold rung,
And swung the hangman's rope;
And foolish plots and foolish fears
Deafened a fluttering monarch's ears.

No traitor, Cecil, to his blood,
No recreant to his faith;
Where Howard and where Talbot stood,
He fronted, calmly, death;
Nor abjured, in her bitter need,
His father's church, his father's creed.

THE CHAPTER.

A lull comes o'er the fiercest strife,
Ebb to the strongest tide;
They proffered him a chance of life
Where men less constant died:
The *choice* is yet a cruel mock,
A lifelong exile, or the block!

"I may find fairer realms than mine,
Dear England! none so nigh
My heart! My sire's broad lands are mine
No more. My bones will lie
Alone; unvisited will be
My grave, beyond the Western sea."

And Cecil *has* no home. The Hall
Will ring to strangers' glee.
And he has said good-by to all,
But *her* he could not see;
For there *are* sobs men may not quell;
He could not say to her—Farewell.

Where the Tower's awful shadows loom,
His ship floats on the river;
Along the shore, athwart the gloom,
The lights of London quiver;
And faint the distant echoes die
Of music and of revelry.

“She at the palace fete to-night
Will dance—and I am here!
She never gave me *smiles*—she might
Have given me a tear!
The sharpness of an exile’s sorrow
Is mine—and she may wed to-morrow!”

“Night wanes! Our breeze will soon be past,
Lord Cecil, while you dream!
What oars are they that dip so fast?
What light is yonder gleam?
A barge! They hail us!” “We have brought
Tidings! A messenger from Court!”

“The *messenger* is young! His face!—
His form! Oh God! ‘tis she!”
She motioned with a timid grace,
Her smile was rare to see;—
“Your vows were very warm, my Lord!
I trust you will not break your word!”

He caught her to his breast. The ship
Glides swiftly down the river;
The smile that plays upon her lip
Will wake for him for ever;
And with the love-light in *her* eyes
He will not miss his native skies.

WAITING.

THE stars shine on his pathway,
The trees bend back their leaves,
To guide him in the meadow,
Among the golden sheaves,
Where stand I, longing, loving,
And listening as I wait
To the nightingale's sweet singing—
Wild singing to its mate.

My thoughts flow into rhythm,
For the music in the air
Heralds my lover's coming,
And tells me he is there.
Come, for my arms are empty!
Come, for the day *was* long!
Turn the darkness into glory,
The sorrow into song.

I hear his footfall's music,
I feel his presence near;
All my soul responsive answers,
And tells me he is here.

O stars, shine out your brightest!
O nightingale, sing sweet!
And guide him to me waiting,
And speed the flying feet.

AT SUNSET.

THE golden clouds sail southward fast,
Ships on a summer sea;
As swift, as sure, my thoughts fly back
My love, to thee.

A path of glory o'er the wave
The moon sends down to me;
Star answers star from sea to sky,
And so, to thee.

My soul to thine, in happy calm,
Floats up all glad and free,
And waiteth at the path that leads,
My love, to thee.

THE UNKNOWN GREAT.

'TIS not alone on tented fields
That mighty victories are won,
'Tis not alone 'mid carnage wild
Heroic deeds are nobly done.

Within the school-room's humble walls,
Beside the couch of pain,
Are greener laurels daily earned
Than conquerors ever gain.

Whether with pickaxe or with sword,
With musket or with pen,
Man's noblest work is best performed
When man can better men.

We build the monument above
The titled hero's bed,
We strew the leader's path with flowers,
Forgetting those he led.

Some journeyman of Tubal Cain,
Whose name we'll never know,
Forged, from the rusty iron ore,
The first bright, shining hoe;

Then first the tares from out the corn
Were plucked by willing hands,
Then grape-vines took the thistle's place,
And plenty filled the land.

Some potter, long since turned to clay,
Made bowls our feast to grace;
Who sings his praise with song and wine?
Who knows his resting-place?

The Unknown Great! behold their work
Where mighty cities stand,
Where navies float upon the seas,
Where vineyards shade the land!

They labored on the Appian Way,
The Pyramids they reared;
They rescued Holland from the sea,
The gloomy forests cleared.

From granite, hidden in the earth,
They built the walls of Rome;
They bridged the Tiber, Seine, and Thames,
And rounded Peter's dome;

They gave the name to Flodden Field;
They fought at Marston's Moor;
And Runnymede and Waterloo
Were deluged with their gore;

They braved the cold at Valley Forge,
The foe at Lake Champlain;
They piled the ground at Abraham's Height,
And Solferino's plain.

* * * * *

They're coming home, the boys in blue,
We greet them with our cheers;
But, as we mark how thin their ranks,
Fast fall the scalding tears.

Honor the favored that remain,
The living boys in blue!
And doubly honor those not here,
The boys the rebels slew!

Stand back, and let the brave men pass!
Open the crowded street!
The soil is better where they march,
'Tis sacred where they sleep.

We ne'er may know the soldier's names,
Their regiment, or State;
But, this we know, they saved the land,
They are the Unknown Great!

The Unknown Great lie all around,
On Lookout Mountain's side,
'Mid Shiloh's hills, at Gettysburg,
Where'er the brave men died;

THE CHAPTER.

Their graves are in the Wilderness,
On sandy, lone Tybee;
They ridge full many a cotton field;
They skirt the sounding sea.

One monument sufficeth all,
A reunited State.
And one inscription doth for each—
“Here lies the Unknown Great!”

ROSES.

THE roses! Oh, the roses!

They were crimsoning that day,
As we lingered in their sweetness,
And she chose the fairest spray.
I said her blushes shamed them,
I called them scarcely meet
To lie upon her bosom,
Or scatter at her feet.

The roses! Oh, the roses!

Was it but a summer shower?
Or was it blinding tear-drops
That scattered them that hour?
Was it but the wind that rent them?
And turned her cheek so white
Or some prophetic sorrow
For the glory of the night?

The roses! Oh, the roses!

Let me fly their hateful red;
For they wake forbidden memories,
And they bloom above the dead.
Pale, pale should be these blossoms
As I walk alone to-day,
And recall the wondrous beauty
'Neath the roses laid away.

BY THE SEA.

THE wind blows soft from the south to-night;
The long wave kisses the beach.
They are clustered out there in the faint star-light,
Just beyond the ripple's reach—
A graceful group, with its masses of white,
Its shimmer of lawn and lace!
I caught Kate's voice in the lull just now;
But I go not nigh the place.

Your voice, madam, is clear and sweet,
Your beauty regnant and rare;
But I scan your face for a nameless grace—
There's something I miss in your air.
Nay, I love the flush of averted cheek,
I love your love-replies;
But my pulse never leaps with the olden thrill
As I look in your violet eyes.

And I think how the sun that sank in the West
On another ocean smiles;
The wave that flutters his broad blue breast
Was born by Indian isles;

And a spell, whose power I had dreamed was o'er,
A wayward memory lures—
Ah, Kate, the face where I gaze once more
Is another face than yours!

A dainty face, with its low brow framed
In masses of deep brown hair,
It's thy brown eye like a roe untamed,
The cheek more pale than fair.
How silent she is! and how fearfully sweet
Her silence seems to me,
As once more in my dream I lie at her feet,
Alone by the summer sea.

Not wider than ocean than the fate
Which severed each from each;
But we scarcely hear the chill "Too late,"
For the murmur on the beach.
We know the fierce undertow of life
Our joy must downward bear;
But hope and doubt rest an hour from strife.
And love is too strong for despair.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

A WASTE of land, a sodden plain,
A lurid sunset sky,
Wild clouds that fled and faded fast
In ghostly phantasy;
A field upturned by trampling feet,
A field up piled with slain,
With horse and rider blent in death
Upon the battle-plain.

The dying and the dead lie low;
For them no more shall rise
The evening moon, nor midnight stars,
Nor daylight's soft surprise.
They wake no more to tenderest call,
Nor see again each home
Where waiting hearts shall throb and break
When this day's tidings come.

* * * * *

Two soldiers, lying as they fell
Upon the reddened clay,
In daytime foes, at night at peace,
Breathing their lives away.

Brave hearts had stirred each manly breast,
Fate only made them foes;
And lying, dying, side by side,
A softer feeling rose.

“Our time is short,” one faint voice said,
“To-day we did our best”
On different sides; what matter now?
To-morrow we’re at rest.
Life lies behind: I might not care
For only my own sake;
But far away are other hearts
That this day’s work will break.

“Among New Hampshire’s snowy hills
There pray for me to-night
A woman, and a little girl,
With hair like golden light”—
And at the thought, broke forth at last,
The cry of anguish wild,
That would not longer be repressed—
“O God! My wife—my child!”

“And,” said the other dying man,
“Across the Georgia plain,
There watch and wait, for me, loved ones
I’ll never see again!

A little child, with dark, bright eyes,
Each day waits at the door
The father's step, the father's kiss,
That never greet her more.

"To-day we sought each other's lives:
Death levels all that now;
For soon before God's mercy-seat
Together we shall bow.

- Forgive each other while we may;
Life's but a weary game;
And, right or wrong, to-morrow's sun
Will find us dead the same."

The dying lips the pardon breathe,
The dying hands entwine;
The last ray dies, and, over all,
The stars from heaven shine;
And the little girl with golden hair,
The one with dark eyes bright,
On Hampshire's hill and Georgia's plain,
Were fatherless that night.

ZETA PSI.

[A poem delivered at a Supper given on the evening of the 5th of November, 1864,
in honor of the establishment of the Omega Chapter.]

FROM the rapids of the Mohawk,
From Narragansett Bay,
From the willows of the Kennebec,
From the Lake State far away;
From homes so distant severed,
From hearth-stones warm and bright,
Brother in heart, with features strange,
We welcome you to-night.

With feet all weary from the tread
Of life's deceitful way,
We meet within this wayside inn,
And here our burdens lay.
Like mutual prodigals we come,
Tired of the husks of swine,
To gather round one father's board,
With mirth, and song, and wine.

In the chivalric times, long past,
In old crusading days.
Some gallant knights by chance had met,
While riding diverse ways;
No sign of recognition passed.
None word of greeting spoke;
Each looked suspicious on the rest,
No one the silence broke.

Each sullen sat absorbed in thought
Of friends to meet no more—
The happy group he left behind,
On distant Albion's shore;
And then each thought of those who fell.
The noblest of the line,
Whose bones lay bleaching on the sand
Of far-off Palestine.

At length, one drew a golden cross
From 'neath his coat of mail,
When quick rose up each gallant knight,
And bade the stranger hail;
Strangers no more, but brothers now,
For on each manly form,
Beneath the triple-plated steel,
That golden cross was worn.

Like those brave knights, we need no scrip,
Indorsed with seal and hand,
To tell who may the worthy be
To join our mystic band.
'Mid northern winter's chilling snows.
In southern sultry air,
Where'er this golden badge is seen,
Go, greet thy brother there.

* * * * *

For our young brothers gathered here,
I'll answer one and all.
Good boys! I've known them long and well.
We'll help them lest they fall!
I pledge a god-sire's care to each,
An elder brother's love,
That they dishonor not our craft,
But worthy brothers prove.

You are our Western pioneers,
Our outward picket line;
Be vigilant to guard your post,
Extend your ranks with time;
Be ready with your armor on,
To fight for Zeta Psi;
And ever let your banner be
Inscribed, "Tau Kappa Phi."





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